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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
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In re Patent Application of:

)Attorney Docket No.: E-731

Linda V. Gravell et al.

)Group Art Unit: 3621

Serial No.: 09/242,210

)Examiner: C. Scherr

Filed: November 4, 1999

)Date: September 7, 2004

Confirmation No.: 9775

Title: VIRTUAL POSTAGE METERING SYSTEM

Mail Stop Appeal Brief - Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

APPELLANTS' REPLY BRIEF TO EXAMINER'S ANSWER

Sir:

This Reply Brief, filed pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.193, is in response to the Examiner's Answer mailed August 25, 2004.

(1) On page 6, second paragraph, the Examiner's Answer states, "Claim 1 does not even recite a digital signature per se. What is claimed is a 'digital token.'" Line 8 of claim 1, however, recites "signing the transaction record." This signature is what authenticates and protects the integrity of the information in the transaction record. The Examiner's Answer is apparently confusing the generation of a digital token for a mail piece with signing the transaction record. These are not the same. There is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in Kara of signing a transaction record and storing the transaction record in a database as is recited in claim 1.

(2) On page 7, second paragraph, the Examiner's Answer contends that Whitehouse discloses signing a transaction record, and relies on the text from Col. 11, lines 26-29 to support this contention, which recites a "Public key reference number (indicating which key was used by the central computer to digitally sign the postage indicium for this postage dispensing event)." Note, however, that this refers to the public key used to sign the postage indicium. The postage indicium is not the same as a transaction record. As noted on page 10 of Appellants' Brief on Appeal, although Whitehouse discusses the use of a digital signature, this signature is added to the other parts of the postage indicium and a message, including data representing the postage indicium with the digital signature, is encrypted and then the resulting message is transmitted to the requesting user. (Col. 13, line 15-50). This is not the same as signing a transaction record associated with generating the digital token and storing the signed transaction record in the storage device of the data center as is recited in claims 9 and 14.

(3) Appellants' Brief on Appeal addresses the remaining issues contained within the Examiner's Answer.

In conclusion, at least for the reasons stated above and those provided in Appellant's Brief on Appeal, Appellant respectfully maintains that the final rejection of claims 1 and 9-18 is in error and should, therefore, be reversed.

Respectfully submitted,



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